United Nations S/2018/588

Security Council

Distr.: General
14 August 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 14 August 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am writing to you regarding the horrific and tragic incident which took place on 9 August 2018, wherein a school bus in the market of a densely populated area in Dahyan, a town in the Yemeni province of Saada, was deliberately targeted by Saudi Arabia, leaving 131 civilians dead or injured. Of the 131 victims, 52 were left dead, among them 40 children, and 79 wounded, including 56 children. The pitiful and touching side of this "single worst attack since 2015" is that all the dead and wounded children were under 15 years old and most of them were between 6 and 11 years old.

The Islamic Republic of Iran condemns this inhumane act in the strongest possible terms and is of the firm belief that the insufficient reaction to the crimes of Saudi Arabia in Yemen has extremely emboldened it to continue such atrocities, this time by killing dozens of innocent children.

It is also the direct result of removing this country from the list of violators of the rights of children in armed conflict, as well as the inaction of the Security Council in preventing these brutalities in bombing residential areas and killing civilians. One can recall a few of those crimes, with reference to the killing of at least 65 civilians in air strikes in Taiz, including 17 people from one family on 22 August 2015; the killing of 131 civilians in an air raid on a wedding party in Wahijah village, near al-Mokha, on 28 September 2015; the killing of 28 people in an air strike at a wedding party in Sanban, Dhamar province, on 7 October 2015; the killing of 40 civilians in a market north-east of Sanaa on 27 February 2016; and the killing of at least 140 people and injuring of more than 500 in several air strikes on a funeral reception in Sanaa on 9 October 2016.

We underline the importance of the statement made on 10 August 2018 by the spokesperson for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, wherein it is stated "any attack which directly targets civilians not directly taking part in hostilities or civilian objects amounts to a war crime". With that in mind, we also recall the details within the same statement documenting the total civilian casualty population between 26 March 2015 and 9 August 2018, amounting to 17,062 civilians (6,592 dead and 10,470 injured), the majority of which were a result of air strikes carried out by the Saudi-led coalition.

This recent horrendous killing of innocent children in a school bus, which was carrying a group of students attending summer classes learning the Holy Qur'an, takes place only a few days after another attack by Saudi Arabia in a busy fishing market and the main hospital of the city of Hodeida on 2 August 2018, resulting in the death

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of 60 Yemeni civilians, including medical workers, and the injury of at least 170 other civilians.

It is evident that the inaction of the Security Council to such an incident, which is a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, constituting a crime against humanity and a war crime, has emboldened Saudi Arabia to the extent that it has shamelessly denied such measures, as reflected in its letter dated 3 August 2018 (S/2018/573) to the President of the Council. Following that, a spokesman for the Saudi-led coalition, Colonel Turki al-Malki, also defended the brazen killing of children and called the attack on a school bus a "legitimate military target" carried out in accordance with international humanitarian law.

The Islamic Republic of Iran once again warns that continued indifference, leniency and inaction against the blatantly gross systematic violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, with total impunity, by Saudi Arabia would only further embolden it to kill more innocent defenceless children. It is evident that a mere call for "a credible and transparent investigation" and any similar measures short of bringing the perpetrators of such brutalities to justice is insufficient.

The international community must compel Saudi Arabia to end its military and political interventions in, and lift the blockade against, Yemen, which is now the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. While the military intervention in Yemen is doomed to fail, a peaceful solution to the crisis in this country can be achieved only through an all-inclusive, Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned national dialogue. The Islamic Republic of Iran continues to strongly support this approach.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gholamali **Khoshroo**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative